Improvement in Mental Health Care

3695. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve the 'mental health care' after the incident at 'Ervadi' in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to help the victims of the Ervadi incident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Government of Tamil Nadu have initiated actions for prevention of such incidents in the future. A psychiatrist has been posted to Ervadi Primary Health Centre with adequate supply of psychiatric medicines and Health Inspector had been instructed to visit places where mentally ill are detained. Government of Tamil Nadu has decided to permit only licensed premises for such mentally ill persons and shut down all unlicensed premises. Heads of Department of Psychiatry of all Government Medical Colleges have been appointed as Inspecting Officers for inspection of Psychiatric Hospital/ Nursing Homes. Steps have been taken to send the patient who have shown substantial improvement to their families and other patients to Mental Health Institutions run by the Government. A Monitoring Committee is being set up in each district under the chairmanship of the District Collector, Psychiatrist and district health authorities to monitor all such institutions to ensure the guidelines to be formulated by the State Mental Health Authority are followed and a Psychiatrist will be posted to all the District Headquarters Hospitals for better mental health care. All District Collectors have been directed to make immediate inspection of all shelters for mentally ill and ensure that in future no such shelter is allowed to function without getting a license as per Mental Health Act, 1987.

(c) The Government of Tamil Nadu had granted Rs. 15,000/- to the relatives of each deceased. Out of 571 mentally ill patients released from the shelters in and around Ervadi, 273 patients had been taken back by the relatives, 20 patients had been admitted in Ramanathapuram Government Hospital and the remaining 278 patients are being examined by a team of psychiatrists. The 200 chronically ill patients will be admitted to the Institute of Mental Health, Chennai for treatment and the remaining persons will be rehabilitated by the Collector Ramanathapuram in consultation with District Health Officials.